

ERIK WEINGARTNER
BIRTH DATE: FEBRUARY 2ND, 1914
INTERVIEW DATE: JANUARY 21ST, 1994
AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 80
RUNNING TIME: 97:42
INTERVIEWER: KATE MOORE
RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME AS ABOVE
TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: AMANDA CARELLA
TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY: SAME AS ABOVE

BRAZIL, 1926
AGE: 12.5

SHIP: THE WESTERN WORLD
PORT: SANTOS
RESIDENCES:
GERMANY, HAGEN
BRAZIL, PORTO UÑION, IGUAZU RIVER
UNITED STATES, New York, NY

ORAL HISTORIAN'S NOTE:

MOORE: Good afternoon, this is Kate Moore for the National Parks Service. Today is the 21st of January, 1994, and I'm in Sun City, Nevada, at the home of Erik Weingartner, who came from Germany, but originally came from Ellis Island from Brazil in 1926 when he was twelve and a half years old. Why don't you begin by giving us your full name and date of birth please?

WEINGARTNER: My name is Erik Weingartner, I was born February the 2nd, 1914, in the city of Hagen, Germany.

MOORE: How do you spell Hagen?

WEINGARTNER: H-A-G-E-N.

MOORE: And, uh, what size town was Hagen?

WEINGARTNER: I be – if I remember correctly, it could have been a city of about two hundred thousand population.

MOORE: Do you remember at all what the town looked like?

WEINGARTNER: Yes. I remember the, uh – there was a river flowing through it, there a was bridge to cross, and when you got to the other side, you got into the heart of the city, and uh – they had a *Rathaus* there, which is a ci – city hall, and um, monuments there –

MOORE: And what – what was the major industry of Hagen?

WEINGARTNER: It's up in the industrial part – eh – part of Germany. The – with the – you could call it the Pittsburgh of Germany up there, with the [not understood] Essen, Düsseldorf, Dortmund, they're all in that area.

MOORE: Mm-hmm. What was your father's name?

WEINGARTNER: My father's name was Ignatz. I-G-N-A-T-Z.

MOORE: And what was his occupation?

WEINGARTNER: He was a plasterer, over in the States he worked as a plasterer.

MOORE: And in Germany?

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WEINGARTNER: He was the same trade, but they call that a *stukkateur* [alternate: *stuckateur*] out there –

MOORE: [interposed] How do you spell that? *Stukkateur?*

WEINGARTNER: – He did all this nice artwork that you see in the old buildings –

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WEINGARTNER: – But you don't see nowadays anymore, they're different – uh – circles on the ceilings where the lamps and lights are hanging. He did all that type of work.

MOORE: Um, could you describe what he looked like, your father?

WEINGARTNER: Yeah, he was a little taller than I am, blonde hair –

MOORE: [interposed] Which – which is how tall?

WEINGARTNER: He must have been five six, or five seven.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WEINGARTNER: Yeah. And then, uh, he had blue eyes, of course. He was from a family of – four boys, then a girl, and then four more boys.

MOORE: (Laughs) What about his personality and temperament? How would you describe him?

WEINGARTNER: Oh, I think it was normal for those days. I got my shares of – uh – paddling, you know? To put it mildly! (Laughs)

MOORE: So he was strict?

WEINGARTNER: He was strict, yes, oh yeah.

MOORE: And, uh, is there a story about your father that you associate with your childhood?

WEINGARTNER: Well, I think there were many a time – in fact I mentioned to my name – we – and, uh, my father came home from the war I was four years old.

MOORE: The first war?

WEINGARTNER: First World War, right. And I didn't know I had a father. So here's a man in the house, tellin' me what to do, and I look at my mama and I, "Hey, mama," (laughs) you know? And that – didn't sit right with him, of course, you know, his own son. So, after a few paddlings, I lined up. (Laughs) I found out he was my father.

MOORE: Well how about your mother, what was her name?

WEINGARTNER: Marie.

MOORE: Marie.

WEINGARTNER: Yeah.

MOORE: And what was her maiden name?

WEINGARTNER: Rosenthal.

MOORE: R –

WEINGARTNER: -O-S-E-N-T-H-A-L.

MOORE: Right. And what was her occupation?

WEINGARTNER: Housewife.

MOORE: Mm-hmm. And what did she look like?

WEINGARTNER: She was a dark blonde, also with blue eyes. And I imagine she stood about five four, five five.

MOORE: And what was her dis – her dis – uh – her personality and temperament?

WEINGARTNER: Very good. By that I mean that – uh – especially when dad got mad, she was protective, to the children.

MOORE: Mm. And what were her chores around the house, then?

WEINGARTNER: Oh gosh, there were many. There were ha – we didn't have a washing machine, or laundry machine like we have nowadays. So every Monday was on the – on the – washboard doing the laundry.

MOORE: Mm.

WEINGARTNER: Real old-fashioned way.

MOORE: And is there a story about your mother that you associate with your childhood?

WEINGARTNER: (Pause) No, not really, just that uh – Mum was a, uh – used to get Mum – Dad – mad, used to accuse me hangin' on my mother's skirt, you know? Hold on when you were a little kid on mama's skirt, you know how it goes.

MOORE: No how – could you name all your brothers and sisters? I know you had many.

WEINGARTNER: [interposed] Oh yeah. No, I had only one brother.

MOORE: Only one brother?

WEINGARTNER: His name was Kurt: K-U-R-T.

MOORE: In- in Germany?

WEINGARTNER: In Germany, and he was fourteen months younger than I am.

MOORE: Mm-hmm. And, uh – could you tell us about your house in Germany? What do you remember?

WEINGARTNER: We didn't have a house, we lived in apartment.

MOORE: Oh, an apartment, okay.

WEINGARTNER: [interposed] Yeah.

MOORE: And, uh – how large was the apartment?

WEINGARTNER: Yeah, there was kinda cr – cramped there for a while, then we moved – to a larger quarter because we were getting big, and well –

MOORE: The original, how big was that?

WEINGARTNER: Well, it was one big bedroom, and we all slept in one bedroom, there was a living room and a large kitchen. I don't know if there really was a living room. It was a very large kitchen, and you c-c- you ate and you congregated in the kitchen.

MOORE: Mm-hmm. And, uh – so there were three rooms basically, you think.

WEINGARTNER: I think so, yeah.

MOORE: And where was – uh – that apartment – in relation to the city?

WEINGARTNER: Well, it was in the city. Y –

MOORE: [interposed] In the center?

WEINGARTNER: No, a little ja – slightly off, yeah.

MOORE: Yeah. And how was it heated, the apartment?

WEINGARTNER: It wasn't. It wasn't heated. We had a big coal stove, and that, uh, heated up the, uh, large kitchen, and that was it. And for the night, it was very cold, mum used to keep the door open for the bedroom, to get some heat into the bedrooms.

MOORE: Mm-hmm. Was there a garden?

WEINGARTNER: There was a little something in the back, yeah, but not – not much to speak of.

MOORE: And what kind of plumbing did you have?

WEINGARTNER: We had uh – we had water.

MOORE: Running water?

WEINGARTNER: Running water, but I don't know if we had hot water even. I know that the toilet was out in the hallway. You shared it with the neighbor across the street – eh – across the hall.

MOORE: Mm-hmm. Um, who else lived in the building?

WEINGARTNER: Oh, there was co – coupl – we lived in the ground floor, so there was a couple of stories above us.

MOORE: Mm-hmm. And um, who did the cooking in your family?

WEINGARTNER: My mother.

MOORE: Right. And what was your favorite food, do you remember?

WEINGARTNER: Oh, yeah. Potato pancakes (laughs), was one of them!

MOORE: Okay. And when you – when you answer though, you ta – should look at me, because of the microphone, that's right.

WEINGARTNER: [interposed] Yeah.

MOORE: All right. And did you ever help cook at home?

WEINGARTNER: No, not up to that point, not – not – not before ten.

MOORE: Could you describe the kitchen? Everybody congregated there, what was it like?

WEINGARTNER: Well, you had the sink on one side, you know, and then there was a door to the rear yard, and then there was a door this way to the bedrooms, which were up to the front of the street. The one bedroom. And, uh – that's about it.

MOORE: Um, did you have any animals at all?

WEINGARTNER: No pets, no.

MOORE: No. And, uh, what was mealtime like? Describe your daily meals.

WEINGARTNER: I don't know. Well, we used to go to sc – we went to school, we were given sandwiches to take a long for – at school time, you know. And then – then – even in school there was a big supper day – time – when Dad – Dad came home from work.

MOORE: Which was about when?

WEINGARTNER: Oh, just beyond six o'clock.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WEINGARTNER: Yeah.

MOORE: And you – did you all eat together?

WEINGARTNER: Yes.

MOORE: Yes. And were there other family members nearby?

WEINGARTNER: Later on, before we moved out to Brazil, my mother's – my grandfather, he died. And then there was a younger brother to my mother. My mother was the eldest. My uncle – the brother to my mother, I'm speak of – he was the youngest. He was a miner, and he came living with us –

MOORE: But now are you talking about Germany? Or –

WEINGARTNER: In Germany.

MOORE: Right.

WEINGARTNER: Before we moved to Brazil.

MOORE: I see.

WEINGARTNER: And my – he was just at that age where he had to learn a trade – he was learning a trade – he had learnt a trade as a baker, which he didn't care for.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WEINGARTNER: The apprenticeship, the whole bit, you know. And um, my father was in the building trades, and he had a business of his own. He had -- I think four of his brothers working for him, so he took my uncle in too. And the building trade was a little too hard on him – [not understood] – And uh (pause) then the mo –then the idea c-c-came – no, it wa –

my father got in touch with one of his brothers who had moved right after 1918, the war ending, bound to Brazil. Actually my father wanted to come to the States, but my uncle in Brazil, that was my uncle, A-Adolf, that was his name, and uh, he persuaded him to move down to South America, Brazil. Instead of moving to the United States. When we got down there, my father was greatly disappointed.

MOORE: With – with –?

WEINGARTNER: With the economic conditions in Brazil.

MOORE: Right, well, let's back up, we have a few other things to ask you.

WEINGARTNER: [interposed] Yeah. We – we – were running away to something else

MOORE: [interposed] We'll get to Brazil in a moment – yeah, okay, but we'll get to Brazil in a moment. What did, um – did you have your grandparents living near you in Hagen?

WEINGARTNER: In Hagen, no. The lived in the – my mother was a Hessian. You heard about them in grammar school, I know I did.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WEINGARTNER: They fought with – uh – Washington, right. On the –

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WEINGARTNER: The Hessians were –were hired by the British weren't they? They were fighting Washington.

MOORE: [interposed] Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

WEINGARTNER: Right, that's what it wa – it was, yeah. They were mercenaries.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WEINGARTNER: Yeah. Then, she came from [not understood], that's where my grandparents lived. And – we used to visit there, now and then. I remember some of the visits, going over to visit grandpa. Yeah, I remember that.

MOORE: Um, were you particularly close to anyone in your family besides your parents?

WEINGARTNER: I was close to my uncle, who was nine years older than I am.

MOORE: Your uncle?

WEINGARTNER: Yeah, that's the brother. I just mentioned he came – moved in with us, and then we had to get a larger –

MOORE: Flat.

WEINGARTNER: Flat, right.

MOORE: Um, do you have any anecdotes about your family members that you tell about the past?

WEINGARTNER: Not really. Once in a while we had company coming from one of my uncles from my father's side. And they get together and then they would –

MOORE: (sneezes)

WEINGARTNER: There was – eh – gesundheit.

MOORE: Excuse me.

WEINGARTNER: And uh – they would – uh – talk and ta – you know how they talk, I mean, you're a child, you sit there and listen. And, uh, was – was interesting, you know?

MOORE: Well, what about – what about religious life? Did you – were you religious at all?

WEINGARTNER: Not very, no.

MOORE: Did your parents – what denomination were you?

WEINGARTNER: Well, that – they ha – we had – my parents had a bit of a problem there. My father was a Catholic –

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WEINGARTNER: My mother was a – uh – Lutheran, Evangelical. In German, they call Evangelisch.

MOORE: [interposed] Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

WEINGARTNER: But it's Lutheran/Protestant, you know. Over here. And o -- c-c-came Christmas time or Easter, that's when the problem came. Which church do we go to? So naturally, mama wanted to go to the Protestant church with the Lutherans, you know. We usua – we usually wound up over there. But there was an argument about it.

MOORE: And your father wanted to go to –?

WEINGARTNER: Catholic.

MOORE: Right.

WG: Yeah. And father comes back from the war – he never said it to me, but I assumed that's where he was – he comes back from the wars, and his two boys are Protestants. (Laughs)

MOORE: (Laughs) Well, what – describe the church that you did go to – the Lutheran church – what– where was that, and how did it look?

WG: Well, I remember being in there, and – and in the old times, church in Europe, in Germany, anyhow – the pastor was up in a, uh – what they call a *consulai* [ph]. He was up high looking down upon his flock.

MOORE: Mm.

WG: His parishioners, right?

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And he'd be up there, saying the sermon and so forth, I remember that, very well.

MOORE: So, when you did go to church, when did you go with your mother?

WG: Just every year. High holidays like Christmas, and Easter.

MOORE: Mm. And um, at home did you have any religious practices? Did you have prayers, did you say grace?

WG: Well, when we were very small, I imagine we did, but I don't remember it, we – we didn't sit down for – have grace before we ate, no.

MOORE: Did you ha – experience any religious persecution or prejudice of any sort in Germany?

WG: No.

MOORE: (Laughs) All right, holiday celebrations, you mentioned them. What were some of them – the best –where you spent –?

WG: Well, Christmas wa – Christmas was always nice, you know.

MOORE: And describe that as – what kind of celebrat –

WG: We always had the Christmas tree. We'd go out – we were allowed to come along and, went shopping with Dad for a Christmas tree. And then – we – enjoyed carrying it home, and then had to be trimmed – to be trimmed at all. But then those days, the kids were put to bed, and they were – and by the – when you got up the next

morning, all the gifts were on the – from Santa Claus – were on under the Christmas tree.

MOORE: And how did Santa Claus come to the house?

WG: He came – uh – dressed, and, uh, as a Santa Claus – not very much like ours, the European Santa Claus looked a little different. And uh, he also had a sort of a – they call it a *rute* [switch] it's – it was li – almost like a – a broom. He'd swat you with it if you weren't a – he'd ask you, "Were you a good child? Were you good? Did you behave and all that?" And if you weren't, you got one across the behind, you know?

MOORE: And when did he – he came to the house when?

WG: Uh – actually this was a – a couple of weeks before Christmas.

MOORE: Uh, Little Christmas you mean, celebration?

WG: No, no, no – S-Saint Nikolaus they – they – they had Nikolaus Day. [In Germany: Nikolaustaug, Dec. 6th]

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: It could be the first week in December, thereabouts.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And, uh, I remember that.

MOORE: And so, he came to the house, and was that a good thing that Santa Claus came?

WG: Oh yeah. But uh – he was also threatening, and intimidating, you know. (Laughs)

MOORE: And, uh, did he – was he alone?

WG: [interposed] He-he'd scare you – he'd scare you – he'd scare you more than, uh – than –than not scare you, you know?

MOORE: And wo – did – uh – did he bring anything with him, or anyone with him?

WG: No, he would sa – um – [not understood] the way I remember, he came alone, and he had a bag – and he'd have walnuts, hazelnuts, something, in – in a small bag. Things were – it was so shortly after the war, there wasn't many gifts to be had, you know?

MOORE: Mm. And, um – what did you eat on Christmas dinner? At Christmas dinner? When was it eaten?

WG: Uh-huh. Well, we ha – my mama used to back. And, uh – she'd roll out, and she had – that's where I – maybe I helped her, rolling out the door. And then also she had these little cut-outs, the hearts, S-S-S-S-Santa Claus, and a couple of other things. A Christmas tree and so forth. And cut them out the dough, and put 'em on the pan, and put 'em in the oven, you know. I remember that, yeah.

MOORE: And did – what did you eat for dinner?

WG: Uh – that’s kind of hard to remember. I – I know meat was –

MOORE: [interposed] Any special food –?

WG: Yeah, I know meat was scarce. We had only s-meat once a week, and it was on Sundays. But, uh – we ate vegetables and potatoes, and so forth. My mother was good on the – uh – on making nice, uh, dumplings, potato dumplings, and so forth, and like potato pancakes, you know?

MOORE: Umm, what about school life? You attended school in Germany?

WG: Yeah. Yeah, up to the fourth grade, I went.

MOORE: And wh – where – uh – where was the school that you went to?

WG: Within walking distance.

MOORE: Of your house? Of your apartment in Hagen?

WG: [interposed] Yeah. Yeah. In Hagen, yeah.

MOORE: And do you remember any specific teachers or playmates there?

WG: Mm, very vaguely.

MOORE: And, what was your gavorite subject.

WG: Hmm. History and so forth.

MOORE: Mm. How – how large was the school, and how many students per class?

WG: Geez, I – that's hard, though—?

MOORE: Was it – do you remember anything about the class, how many –?

WG: Yeah, I re – I remember. And once in a while, we've had the – the weather permitting of course, when they got spring going into summer, we'd have sometimes a walk going to certain areas. And, uh, looking up places of history, historic places.

MOORE: Mm-hmm. So, do you – your class consisted of how many students, do you think?

WG: Mm, oh twenty-five, thirty.

MOORE: Mm-hmm. Um – did you learn any English prior to coming to the United States.

WG: Not in Germany, in Brazil I did.

MOORE: In Brazil. And how much did you learn in Brazil.

WG: Oh, enough to be an interpreter when we got on the ship.

MOORE: For whom?

WG: Uh, when we – the person asked us certain questions, and he spoke English, and I had to do the interpreting all the time.

MOORE: For your family?

WG: For the family, f-for mama. For mother.

MOORE: [interposed] I see. And um, all right – wha – back in Germany now, what did you do for entertainment as a child? What kind of games did you play, do you remember any?

WG: Yeah. What did we play? All so – most anything. Everybody didn't have a soccer ball, so we kicked a tin c – a tin-cans around, you know.

MOORE: [not understood] (Laughs) Do you have any childhood stories about, uh – what do they tell about you when you were a child? Anything you did particularly dumb, or uh – (laughs) brilliant?

WG: No, not really. No bu – uh – our family didn't – didn't – we didn't get together that much, uh, talkin' about, uh – somebody, yes you can see their habits when they were small, you know?

MOORE: Mm-hmm. Well, what about – ah – who – do you remember who decided to come to the United States? Do you remember any initial talk about that?

WG: Yeah. There – eh – one summer they had – in Germany – they had, uh, farm school, the Board of Education was in on it, that the city – children couldn't go to the peasants in the outlying country – countryside.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And I wanted to go. I begged Mama, mama, finally she said yes. And I did go with another group – quite a group of children. And we got to small cities where the farmers were, the peasants. They had cows, they had horses and so forth, being that I came – I was raised in the city, you know. And, uh – when I came back from that – I was, I must have been there about, for the duration of the summer to – that real good – back in time to – to start school in the fall.

MOORE: And what year – how old were you again?

WG: I was, uh, nine years old –

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: -- And going on ten. And, uh, I remember that very well – when I came back, then I heard Mom and Dad talking about, “We’re gonna go to Brazil.” So, this was discussed while I was – on the farms with the peasants – on vacation with the farmers.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And when I came back, then that was discussed, and I remember my dad got the – uh – steamship tickets and everything, and I remember – I went as a minor. Uh, but, when you’re over ten you had to pay full fare. I paid half-fare. We left in February – in the meantime, we – I became ten on February the 2nd. And there was trouble – uh – with the travel agency. They wanted me to – they wanted my dad to pay full fare for me –

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: But my fa – dad won out on the point that he made application everything for passage when I was a – only nine years old, not ten. So –

MOORE: And what do you remember – the preparations were getting; what happened when you went to Brazil? You had to s-sell – did you have to sell things?

WG: Oh, yeah, mama felt so bad about this. All her beautiful, uh, kitchen furniture and so forth.

MOORE: What furniture was in your apartment?

WG: Well, in the – in the bedroom, we had a nice bed, and we had a closet – what they call – a portable closet, doesn't have walk-in closets like we have here, you know. Not in those days anyway. And – uh – that was beautiful piece of furniture, and we had nice kitchen furniture and everything. And everything had to b-be sold and left behind, and with that m-money that helped buy the steamship tickets for us to Brazil.

MOORE: So you had to sell things before you had the tickets?

WG: Yeah.

MOORE: And what was that scene like? Do you remember, what – was it emotional for your mother?

WG: Oh, yeah. She felt – “g-give that all that up? I don't,”– I remember her crying about it.

MOORE: Uh-huh.

WG: Yeah.

MOORE: And how about – how about – who did the selling? She did?

WG: Well it didn't go so gr – uh, mutual end between my father and my mother.

MOORE: So, what did you take with you? Did you take anything special with you to Brazil?

WG: Oh, yeah, we had some personal things we took along.

MOORE: Like what?

WG: Albums. We didn't have that – that much either, you had no t.v. in those days, we didn't have a piano or any – any of that stuff, you know? And –

MOORE: Did you take personally anything special for yourself that you still have now?

WG: Oh, my clothing, and maybe my – you know, my school books, my – report card. And uh, clothing.

MOORE: What did you pack these things in?

WG: Uh, wooden crates. Wooden crates. Now, then also – I found out later, that uh, my father, making it out with his brother Brazil, and he

ordered some molds to makes these concrete sewers for underground.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: So my dad bought a certain amount of them, had them all crated and shipped, and also down to Brazil. We get down to Brazil, they found out the city people in the small town – the council people – weren't ready for this great improvement puttin' sewage into the town. Now my dad is stuck, with all these molds. It's kinda lot of money sunk – sunk into that.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And we're running ads, and running ads, and we were in the city of Porto Uñion, and then –

MOORE: Porto –

WG: Uni – Uñion.

MOORE: How do you spell that?

WG: U-N-I-O-N, with a snake over the – N, I think it is.

MOORE: Mm.

WG: And uh –

MOORE: Hold on for a second. Okay. We're gonna go back a little bit.

WG: Yeah.

MOORE: Um, what did your family say that was going to be in Brazil? What did they explain to you about going to Brazil?

WG: There wasn't much explanation. I remember in school when the teacher found out – that was a lady – a lady teacher, woman teacher. Uh, that uh – “Oh, where we're going down to the land where the monk – where they have the monkeys!” (Laughs)

MOORE: And, um, were they very excited about going to Brazil?

WG: Oh yeah. We children – we boys, we were very excited. Oh, yeah, going down.

MOORE: Okay, so now you went to Brazil, and within a short time, you came to America to Ellis Island. What happened that made you want to go to America?

WG: When my dad got down to Brazil – we all did together, with my uncle – so five of us. My dad was greatly disappointed of the – economic conditions down there. His statement was, I heard him say it more than once, “There's no future down here for my boys!” Now we're going back to 1924, you know, 1925, those years. And really, well there wasn't much.

MOORE: Well, back to Germany, you said me – before we started this interview, you mentioned the economic situation in Germany that –

WG: That was bad too, oh yeah.

MOORE: So do – what were the reasons for them going to Brazil?

WG: To get away from that.

MOORE: To get away from the –?

WG: The poor economic po – conditions in Germany at that time.

MOORE: And your father was working as a – plasterer?

WG: [interposed] Plasterer.

MOORE: Right.

WG: Yeah.

MOORE: And did he have work?

WG: Yes, for a period of time, he went – and some of his brothers went with him, being that we lived in the – western part of Germany, which borders close to France –

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: -- My dad and his brothers they went to work to France. They got work in France, and got paid with Francs.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: At their trade, the building trade. And then come home on weekends, and my mama and dad would leave money of course,

and mama would only exchange mar – eh – francs into German marks as many as she needed, because the next day, those German marks weren't buying anything, but – that they bought today.

MOORE: And what year was that?

WG: That was you know, in 1923.

MOORE: Did you have any personal experience in the difference in buying power when you went to the store there?

WG: Well, only when mama sent me down on Evin to go down to – uh – was a grocery store on the style of a super-market, of course smaller – they call it a consume – and uh, sent me down for a loaf of bread, and get this and get that. And I knew – I was beginning to learn, at that age, the difference, the buying power. Yesterday, I could buy a loaf of bread with so-and-so many marks mama gave me, next day I couldn't – I needed double those marks to buy the same loaf of bread. Yeah.

MOORE: And did they tell you this, about the economy? Did they mention that as a reason for leaving?

WG: Yeah.

MOORE: Okay, so they –do you remember the trip to Brazil? How was that like, in the boat?

WG: Oh, was very nice, twenty-one days on boat.

MOORE: And where – what class did you –

WG: Steerage.

MOORE: Steerage?

WG: Oh, yeah.

MOORE: And were you sick?

WG: Oh, the first three days I thought I'd die. Have you ever been seasick? Someone who came along wanted to kill you, you wouldn't fight back, right?

MOORE: (Laughs)

WG: (Laughs)

MOORE: So was your whole family sick on that voyage?

WG: Oh, yeah. It was February, I'd never seen a steamer before. And, uh –we get there in the evenings, up the Bremerhaven – we didn't leave from Hamburg, we left from Bremerhaven, which is in vicinity of Bremen.

MOORE: And how did you get there?

WG: By railroad.

MOORE: By railroad.

WG: To North Germany.

MOORE: Did anyone give you a party before you left?

WG: No, not that I know of.

MOORE: Was –who went to see – do you remember saying goodbye to relatives?

WG: Not – not directly, no.

MOORE: Mm-hmm. And uh, so you went by train –

WG: To, uh, Bremen.

MOORE: Mm.

WG: We spent a day or two in Bremen, I remember going to a museum there and so forth –

MOORE: [interposed] And where did you stay in Bremen?

WG: In a hotel.

MOORE: In a hotel.

WG: Yeah. And then we got on the ship – and it looked huge, I look up there and that's the ship! My God. Then it was evening, we got on, and I remember we got in there, and got down to steerage, oh my God, the smell!

MOORE: Of what?

WG: The – the – it was a certain smell, down there, I've smelled it again every time I went deep sea fishing out of Freeport, Long Island. For tuna, or for blues, later on – when you go down into the bilge, you get that smell from the boat, the bilge and all. But the s-steamer had the same smell. So, uh –

MOORE: It's not something you want to smell?

WG: No, you – but you got used to it. (Laughs) Had no choice!

MOORE: And what combinations were they, down in steerage? What were they?

WG: Uh – you had a berth here, and you had a berth here, and there was a berth above. And it was all wide open.

MOORE: Like a dorm?

WG: Yeah, big dorm. Yeah.

MOORE: And okay, so you went twenty one days, and was – what was the food like?

WG: The food wasn't bad. Uh, I would like to add that – um – once we – it being February, we got out into the North Sea, big ice floes floating around. We got into English Channel, the water was rough, that's when everybody got seasick, going through the English Channel.

MOORE: Mm.

WG: And the ice floes in – in –in the English Channel also. Then we got down to Vigo, we stopped in Vigo –

MOORE: Where's that?

WG: That's Portugal. [sic: located in Galicia, Spain, above Portugal]

MOORE: Mm.

WG: And we took on, migrant workers that, uh – worked down to – they went down to Buenos Aires, and there was no room for them, they slept on the – on the deck of the ship. And they only spoke Spanish, and we only spoke German, right? (Laughs) But we get along. Then we got to the equator, and the weather's getting better by this time, nobody's seasick anymore, you know? And you start enjoying the trip. And being we were boys, we were all over the boat from the front to the rear and so forth. And they had a ceremony, a festivities when they crossed the equator. I don't know if they still do it, but in those days, they did. The whole sh –ship and the crew participates in that, and passengers.

MOORE: Over the equator?

WG: Over the equator.

MOORE: What do you do?

WG: [interposed] Neptune comes out – someone done u-u-up like Neptune – you've seen pictures of it –

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: Of Neptune. Then he's got this big, three pronged fork. In his hands, and, uh –y-you get baptized. Well, they had a big canvas – oh, must have been 'bout that circumference around. They – they'd send him through here, and, uh, with a water hose in the back to force him to go forward. And while he's going through, he's getting paddled from the top down with – (laughs)

MOORE: With what? Paddles?

WG: Yeah.

MOORE: Who – everybody?

WG: Well – uh – the – the crew and so forth.

MOORE: [interposed] Oh, the crew, yeah.

WG: [interposed] Yeah, yeah. We didn't participate, but we were watching. Us boys.

MOORE: [interposed] Oh, so every time the crew went over the equator, they had this ceremony.

WG: [not understood] Yeah, that's right. For the passengers, for everyone, yeah. That was the entertain –part of the entertainment. Yeah.

MOORE: And do you remember – uh – the views from deck? As a child, did you play on deck?

WG: Yeah, you had deck chairs, and uh – they didn't – I don't – did they put a canvas up and call it a swimming pool? You had a big canvas type thing, and uh – but that was on the way, coming ba – up here, remember, you came up, and it was a couple years later. Oh, they had a-amusement – you made your own amusements. Remember playing cards, the German game – those days, they were playing cards, it was known as sixty-six, and then – then -- there was another game that played that was known as *skat*, S-K-A-T. *Skat*. And, uh – we wiled the time away. And for the dining room – yes we ended up out to eating before [ph]. They had big long tables, and a white tablecloth on it. And a lot of food was preserves. Came outta cans.

MOORE: Mm. Well, when you got to Brazil, uh, wha – where did you land?

WG: Ah! We landed Rio Janeiro. That was our first stop. And it was hot! Do – summer! Winter in Germany, at that time, it's summer south of the equator.

MOORE: Mm.

WG: And all us Germans, with out heavy winter clothing. Never faint, never passing out. Adults, I saw 'em. Near the front, guy fainted, that guy fainted, passed out, you know. We were overdressed it was so darn hot down there.

MOORE: Mm.

WG: We got used to it. Then they took us an island known as Isla de Flores, "Island of Flowers."

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: That's the equi –that was the Brazilian equivalent of Ellis Island.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: All the immigrants got taken there by small boats. Fairly tight boats. The ferry just over there. And uh, there again, the accommodations were very much like on boa – on the ship. One big room, a dormitory type, uh, ste – like steerage. Berth here and a berth there, and just –slept.

MOORE: And how long were you detained?

WG: Well, we were on there for two weeks. I have to make contact first, with my uncle down there that we were on. In the meantime, we were rea – we were slated to go, and everything got called off, my brother got sick, we go – he got a touch of malaria.

MOORE: Mmm.

WG: So, uh – they took us back another week, so we were at least two weeks. (Phone rings) Then he got well, and, uh – then we proceeded (phone rings), then we got on a coastal – can I take that phone?

MOORE: Sure, hold on.

[TAPE PAUSES]

MOORE All right, so you got down there, and it was uh – you were detained because of your brother's malaria, and from there, where did you go?

WG: Then, where – from there we -- by coastline, uh – coastal, we went down to (rolls letter) Pa-Pa-Parangua or something like that –was a Port – yeah, Brazilian name –

MOORE: [interposed] Do you know how to spell that?

WG: Finally, we got onto –

MOORE: Wait, wait, wait – how do you spell that? I'll have to trans –

WG: P-A-R-A-N-Q-U-A. [sic] I think that's the way it's – it was a coastal city. Right on –

MOORE: Mm.

WG: And from there we got out – put on a railroad. And then we headed up – we went down to the, you know, Brazil is very much like, this country up here – the structure of it. They have a united states of Brazil, down there, like we have a United States of America up here.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And they have an Independence Day down there, just like we have an Independence Day. 'Cause years back, they were a colony of Portugal. That's why they speak Portuguese there, not Spanish. And, uh – so we got down there to Rio Grande do Sul, and then we got into Paraná, and then later – and the railroads down there, they

look very much like the old locomotives, with these wide funnel-chi – they got the chimneys on the front of the locomotive; that’s what they had down there. And the locomotives were fed –the fuel was wood. So, we traveled so-and-so many miles and would stop, and you’d see the all – the lumber was all stacked up. They had crews –

MOORE: [interposed] Mm-hmm.

WG: -- Living at certain spots, that’s all they did, chopped the wood, and supplied the – the lumber to burn for the rail company. And we loaded back up again, and then we continue.

MOORE: So how many years did you stay in Brazil?

WG: Two and a half.

MOORE: Two and a half.

WG: To be exact.

MOORE: And – and how long into that stay did you know that – then when was the decision made to come to America?

WG: Oh, the first year we were down there. M-m-my fa –

MOORE: [interposed] So, the talks, why did they pick America?

WG: Oh, my dad wanted to come to the states – uh, I mentioned that before – rather than go to Brazil, but my uncle –uh, his brother – persuaded him to go Brazil instead, you know.

MOORE: So, your father then brought up the idea again?

WG: Oh, yeah.

MOORE: Do you remember when that was?

WG: Oh, yeah.

MOORE: And what was your mother's reaction?

WG: Was all for it.

MOORE: Uh-huh.

WG: Yeah. But there was not enough money for all of us to come. And you had to wait also for, the quota system was in ef – going. It isn't like now, where come – walk across the Mexican border and you're in, you know? Those days you had to wait for a quota. And so my dad came – uh – there was some saving had to be done.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: Oh, for a period of time there was no butter on the table. It was just – we had honey instead. Put honey on a slice of bread and that was the sandwich. But there was – the trip was on. And, uh, there was enough saved so that dad could buy himself a steamship ticket, in the meantime he made application with the – uh – German counsel that he wanted to migrate from Brazil to the United States. And he went. Finally.

MOORE: What – what year?

WG: That must have been '25.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And he came up through Brazil –uh – he came up to New York. And he worked in New York a while, he couldn't speak any English or anything, so he couldn't work at his trade – I know he worked as a dishwasher, on—for a period of time, the – the advantage of that was, if you worked as a dishwasher in a restaurant, you at least got a meal.

MOORE: Yeah.

WG: See? That's how those things work out. (Laughs) And – and then on he wound up Mount Kisco, New York. And then by that time he learned English and so forth, and then he got into – got in touch with a builder and so forth, and he got hired, and he worked as a – as a plasterer. In fact, my d-dad later on, he worked for all the big, uh, plastering companies, building companies in New York. Kennedy was one of them – he helped build – put up, uh, Tudor City –

MOORE: Hmm.

WG: He helped put up the Empire State Building. My dad put the – plastered the ceiling on the one hundred and second floor in the Empire State Building. The day before it opened – I was going to trade school at that time, he took me along with him. And then, we rode up the freight elevator, and he got challenged on the bottom by the elevator operator, oh –my dad told me something, since the other

guy said, okay. And up I went and I – went up – went up with him up to the eighty-sixth floor. I didn't get up in the tower, but up to the eighty-sixth floor. And the next day Governor Al Smith opened up officially the Empire State Building. I remember that, yeah.

MOORE: Very good.

WG: Yeah. (pause) But – yeah, go ahead.

MOORE: Well, when you – We need to go back a little bit to the Brazil.

WG: [interposed] Yeah.

MOORE: So your father got here, he was at Mount Kisco, he was working as a plasterer, and then what happened?

WG: [interposed] Mm-hmm. And then, uh, the following year, we came up.

MOORE: And, okay. So you went from Brazil to New York?

WG: Yeah.

MOORE: [interposed] From where in Brazil?

WG: Well, we were in a small town of Porto União, on the River de Iguazu.

MOORE: H-how do you spell that?

WG: I-G-U-A-S-U [sic]

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: I think that's the way, Iguasu.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: G-U-A – we go – you pronounce as “gua” –

MOORE: Mm-hm.

WG: Ah – incidentally, [not understood] uh – my uncle had a son, and his mother died in childbirth. So, when I was down there, he was a little *manino* – *manino* is Portuguese for boy. I carried him around. Two years ago he came up here to visit me!

MOORE: Hmm.

WG: You – would you believe it? Here from Brazil. And –

MOORE: So, part of your family stayed in Brazil?

WG: Yeah, my uncle stayed down there, yeah.

MOORE: So, when you came, you came with whom? Your mother?

WG: My mother, my brother, and my uncle.

MOORE: The one who was le –

WG: Who was a minor at that time, when we left Germany.

MOORE: Right.

WG: And my mother had –my legal rights over him.

MOORE: And he was your brother – your father's –

WG: No, no, my mother's brother.

MOORE: Your mother's brother. Still a child.

WG: [interposed] Yeah. Yeah. He was –he was a Rosenthal.

MOORE: [interposed] He was a Rosenthal.

WG: Yeah.

MOORE: Okay, so. You all – you came together now you –

WG: [interposed] The four of us.

MOORE: Yeah, how did you get to – where did you leave from? What port did you leave from?

WG: Santos.

MOORE: Santos –

WG: Yeah.

MOORE: To New York.

WG: Yeah.

MOORE: And how did you get to Santos?

WG: We were, first of all we were back in the Hinterlands, so to speak, small town with four thousand population – that time – four thousand population that time, we went to school down there and all. And, uh – school was not compulsory in those – years, uh, in uh – Brazil. But my dad wanted us to have an education, so he sent us to school [tape skips] so uh, then uh – yeah, I lost my tra – I lost my t-t-train –

MOORE: [interposed] Santos – how did you get to Santos?

WG: [interposed] Yeah. All right – it was a greet my – in the meantime, my uncle had moved to Curitiba. He – got notified by mail, of course, and he came back to us, and the four of us got on the railroad, and we rode to – São Paolo.

MOORE: Mm-hmm. Curitiba, how do you spell that?

WG: C-U-R-I-T – I-BA. Curitiba, yeah.

MOORE: And, wha – the – the house you lived in Brazil, was it an apartment or a house?

WG: Was a house. That house was ha – a little less than half finished, my dad bought it. Someone couldn't finish for whatever reason. And, uh – he finished it by working Saturdays and Sundays, and uh – in evenings when he came done – uh – was done with – regular job. Came home for supper and had two or three hours time before it got

dark, he went up – it wasn't too far from where my uncle lived, and they nailed it together. Was all boards.

MOORE: How big?

WG: No insulation. What did we have? Uh, we – we had a, uh – well, first of all, the house was up on – on stil – sort of – s – blocks.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And w – I know as kids we used to go under the house and play under the house. So, uh, then we had a kitchen. We had a storage room. And we had a bedroom. And dad put a stairs up, and there was two crawl space bedrooms, upstairs, with the ceiling like the attic rooms, you know? And – uh – that house was all finished and we had moved before my dad left for Brazil. And then mum – mama was alone with us two boys, and my uncle was in Curitiba by this time already. And, uh – we managed. And things got a little rough, and mama got the ol' scrub pail out, and the mop. And, uh – I went along with mama, but my brother wouldn't go. And we used to uh – anks [ph], mop the floor, clean the crispadors [ph], in those days crispadors were standing on every corner, you know. That's another dirty habit that was eliminated, thank God. (Laughs) So, uh – in order to get a couple of – down there at that time, the currency was, uh, *mil reis*, now I think they call it *cruzeiros*

MOORE: [tape skips] spell these for me.

WG: Yeah.

MOORE: You're gonna have to spell these for me.

WG: Yeah. Cruzeiro. C-R-U-C-E-I-R-O [sic].

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And –

MOORE: All right, so, you went with your family then to Santos, by train?

WG: [interposed] And – yeah, so we got to Sao Paolo finally. Now what did – what did – Mama wanted to go as a domestic, had – she had to work to support herself. My uncle found work in the building trades. Now what do you do with the boys? My mother went to, uh, church. She had information fr-from some source. Uh, speaking to neighbors and so forth. And she went to the church, and the in turn had an old age home, on the outskirts of – uh – Sao Paolo.

MOORE: Uh-huh.

WG: But the area was known as Santa Ana.

MOORE: Mm-hmm

WG: And, uh, she spoke to the pastor down there. I think it was a pastor who was in charge, and of course, my mother would pay. And if the church was happy to – or this old age home – they also had orphans there, it was an orphanage – it was a combination thing. Old age home with orphanage.

MOORE: So your mother went to work in Sao Paolo?

WG: She did. And –

MOORE: As a domestic?

WG: As a domestic – and we got put into this orphanage.

MOORE: What year was that?

WG: That was, uh – '23 again. No, no, this was '24. 192 –

MOORE: Then your father --? Wait –

WG: [interposed] No, no – wait a minute, 1926. It was prior to us coming to the states.

MOORE: And so she was trying to save more money?

WG: Yeah.

MOORE: And he put you in an orphanage –

WG: Mm-hm.

MOORE: And, uh, how long were you there?

WG: Mm – couple of months. Three months, four months.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: We were waiting for the – the quota – for – a notification from the German – we, uh – that, uh – we uh, was st –[not understood] were getting the qu – the, uh – permission to enter United States.

MOORE: And how was it?

WG: A little on the primitive side. Well they – [tape skips] they had the – little on the primitive side. They had the – they had a – the children were mixed. There were some real Brazilian children, there were some children that actually had no parents.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And then, um – it was well-organized. Two sisters were running it; two German sisters. And, uh, I think I never see old men around there, so they must have been bachelor gals.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And – uh – they were running it. I'd say they were doing a good job of it – us rabble [ph] – I was practically one the eld – oldest ones there that - and, well you know, I was twelve years old at that time. And, um, we had to pitch in. In the kitchen, help you with the kitchen work. Then when – for mealtime came, the tables were long tables like picnic tables and the benches. And, uh – we had to set the table and so forth, clear the table itself after th-th-eating was done. They had a chef down there, did the cooking. And his sisters – had two sisters – they were more into managing it. And they hired the help to do the job, you know. And then they had the dormitories – they had one for the girls, they had one for the boys.

MOORE: Yeah.

WG: And then, uh – every morning we had to get up, and we had to attend school. So we mar – [tape skips] eldest, I was put in charge of every – I was put in charge of – trolley stati – walt – to the trolley station. Did we take the trolley or didn't we? And then – did we take the trolley or didn't we? And there was a German school up there, it was up a hill, and it had a German teacher there. You know, everything was bilingual down there, but I don't mean –though they were German – every –and I remember these teachers be – and I remember these teacher being in front of the classroom with a violin, we had – this was music study at this – and he taught us the Brahms – in German – and I had to learn – I had to learn it in German and I had to learn it in Portuguese, and every time I hear a little bit, I can see that teacher in front of me. (Laughs) Brahm's Lullabye, with violin he's there teaching us how to sing it, you know? And I couldn't sing a note. So uh –

MOORE: So, this went on for a couple of months.

WG: Yeah.

MOORE: See your mother during that time at all?

WG: Yeah. Every weekend, my mum and my uncle – the two of them would come up and pick us up.

MOORE: And take you where?

WG: Into Sao Paolo. And we went here, and we – [tape skips] and we went here and we – in order not to spend much money, we went all

of these – these – historical places. The South America is great for that, they – if you may know that – they have all these museums up, and they've got these statues out of so-and-so, and so-and-so, you know? And we went [not understood] and then usually have a cup of coffee or something, and a piece of pastry with it. And that was our – uh – afternoon. That was our outing, you know? And uh –

MOORE: So, when did you finally realize you were gonna go to the states?

WG: Well, we were there, and then we got notified from Santos – the German council was in Santos – in fact, if I can stop a moment, I've got the passport, I've got the sht – steam ship tickets that we came up on. I can show them to you.

MOORE: [interposed] I'll see that –yeah I'll see them right afterwards, I think, okay?

WG: Okay. [interposed] And – we --

MOORE: So you – you –you –do you remember the moment when they said, you're going now?

WG: Yeah.

MOORE: When was that?

WG: And I looked at the dates this morning. Was August the 2nd, stamped in the passport, uh – uh – to – go to United States.

MOORE: And what was the [tape cuts out] about that? Your attitude –

WG: W-w-we're happy, we were happy. Of course. [tape skips] We were happ – we were happy. Of course. And on August the 3rd [tape skips] And on August the 3rd, we entered the Western World, the ship; we boarded the ship on Santos. In 1926. So, the day after.

MOORE: [interposed] So wait – so you took – how did you get to Sao Paolo to Santos?

WG: Uh – they had a – they had, a, uh –railroad running from Santos to Sao Paolo. Now, Sao Paolo is high up in the mountains.

MOORE: Mm.

WG: Santos is a port city. And you could smell the coffee. That was the coffee town in those days. You could smell the coffee miles away already. And, uh – they had a railroad running. It was a British railroad. And – uh – that was fueled with coal, remember that. And on certain stretches of that trip – it was a two or two and a half hour trip from Sao Paolo to Santos – they had to hookup on a cable car. They had a third rail between the two rails where the wheels are on, and they had cog wheels on it. In other words, when you're climbing up – the train would not slide backwards.

MOORE: Mm.

WG: I remember them ve – I too – you know when you're at – at that age, you notice everything, I remember that very well. We – 'cause we made those trips – the trip to Santos a couple of time before all finalized it, the – the last step down we stayed overnight in Santos and next day we boarded the ship.

MOORE: And what was the ship like?

WG: It was the Western World, and the Munsen line. It was an American line, name of the ship was Western World. And uh, the next – it was nice, everything was white, painted white and so forth. Then, uh, that's where it hap – came in. We got on, and the person starts asking questions, mama looks at me – (laughs) and I -- I – w – while we were going to this school – while we lived at – in the orphanage, that's where they also taught me English, already.

MOORE: [interposed] Mm-hmm.

WG: And, uh – it helped. So, I had to do the interpreting, from Portuguese, German – when mama and I spoke to the – communicated, most of the time we spoke German. But, uh – and now we get on the ship, they only speak English.

MOORE: (Laughs)

WG: (Laughs) So – I-I-I did the interpreting. We managed. We get the person understood me. And, uh – he wanted to know who's this, who's that? And I said, "That's my brother."
 "Who's that?"
 "Mother."
 See – those were words almost the same as German anyway, you know? So, uh – and then we got – uh – on there and it was steerage. Next day – we slept that night – the next morning we wake up, we were in Rio Janeiro. All tied up. So, we had couple of hours, and we walked through Rio Janeiro, sight-seeing. And then by afternoon we had to be back. Then, uh, the ship left. And it was a twelve day trip to go up to New York.

MOORE: And how was the trip?

WG: Really nice. It was a little rough in the beginning. Went on this trip, this was my second ocean voyage, I didn't get seasick.

MOORE: Did anybody with you get seasick?

WG: Oh, yeah, there was quite a few people on board who were seasick.

MOORE: How about your family?

WG: Uh, I think my father got seasick. My mother got seasick, a bit. But, uh – after two or three days they straightened out, you know?

MOORE: [interposed] What was the food like on that boat?

WG: Well, I mean what we – I'd say it was good –it was a bo – improvement over what we had in Brazil.

MOORE: And what did you take – you – when –

WG: [interposed] Things were – things were ro – were m-meager down there, you know – poor.

MOORE: Um – did any family members see you off, on that boat?

WG: No.

MOORE: And, uh – when – when did the ship depart – the month of the year?

WG: August the 3rd, 1926.

MOORE: [interposed] Okay. Right. Um – the dining room.

WG: Yeah, what was the dining room like? It was lou – [tape skips] –and then – uh – the sleeping quarters were – uh – uh – steerage again.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And uh – [tape skips] –again.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And uh – and um –

MOORE: Do you have any anecdotes about that voyage? Anything funny happen?

WG: No. But I do remember the – the crew members. There – now we're talking – [tape skips] dress in white – now we're talking uh – ripe – I guess guy – rankwise, maybe, just below the captain. They cruise – they walk amongst the passengers, and check out – you know – how everything is, everybody fine. And – uh – one of them was very nice, all in white. He had American currency. He had a dime, he pointed out, and then he had chocolate – Kisses.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: So we got some of them, he gave us some cr – [not understood] make friends, give you a dime here and then, you know, Brazil. And that uh –

MOORE: And –

WG: Those incidents, yeah.

MOORE: And uh –

WG: [interposed] And, uh – another incident I remember, as we got up to the States, the weather got warmer – although in Brazil it was warm already –

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And – they didn't have a party on the ship for crossing the equator.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: It was only going to down to Brazil from [tape skips] crossing the equator, coming up. But uh – as we got, uh – we go – [tape skips] but uh – as we got – come Florida, thereabouts, uh, we saw a lot of wee – seaweed [tape skips] – we see a lot of wee – seaweed floating in the ocean.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And we were told that's the Gulf Stream.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: That was the Gulf Stream. And then in two or three days we w – we will be in New York.

MOORE: I mean, do you remember seeing land for the first time in New York?

WG: Yeah –we were coming up, and – uh – everybody wanted to see the Statue of Liberty, of course, we knew it was there you know, we were told about it. And uh – everybody’s on the railing, waiting to see it. And they saw it – it was a cold – it was a raw day, it wasn’t too cold, but it was all cloudy, the skyscrapers looked so dark and all, and uh –

MOORE: What was the atmosphere on the boat?

WG: Oh, everybody was happy. Oh, yes. And then, uh – I think we pulled in – we didn’t pull into Manhattan, I’m sure of that, we pulled in on the Jersey side, it might – it might have been Hoboken or one of those places. We pulled in there, and of course, first class got left – uh – let off wh –[tape cuts out] and then we got taken onto a ferry type boat [tape skips] – and we got taken onto a ferry type boat to Ellis Island from there?

MOORE: And what do you remember about – uh – Ellis Island?

WG: I remember we’re all going in and everybody else is going in, and uh, they’re they – yeah. They checked us out – he – physically, examination.

MOORE: [interposed] What did they do? In that examination?

WG: I – oh, a little – They look in your eyes. My – I remember my mother m-ma– taking great pains that we washed our eyes out why we still lived in Brazil, ‘cause she had heard rumors that you – there –you

had poor eyesight, they won't let us into the country. So, we – drops of eye drops in Brazil – we were giving eye drops every night, you know. And we passed up here with no eye problems, so we passed out. And, uh, my uncle? Then we got told to go – and you get numbers on, you know? And then we got told: "You got down here," and my uncle went down that way – that aisle. And him being an adult on his own by now – he got let off.

MOORE: You mean he got – went out directly?

WG: Yeah. We – my mother – with two minor children, they wouldn't let her go. My dad wha – didn't know we were coming up from Brazil.

MOORE: Mm.

WG: Mail communication sixty years ago, was a lot different than it is now. So he didn't know we were coming up. And, uh – so they's mailed out telegrams. My mother had an address from him, where he was, but the telegrams all came back. He had moved from one furnished room to another!

MOORE: Mm.

WG: Finally one caught him, and uh, he came. And – th – that was after three days.

MOORE: So you – you're detained three days?

WG: Three days.

MOORE: And where did you stay?

WG: On Ellis Island, we had nice sleeping quarters, nice white sheets, clean beds, and uh – food was good.

MOORE: Did you stay together?

WG: Yeah.

MOORE: So you weren't separated from your mother?

WG: Yeah – I don't think so. I'm not clear anymore.

MOORE: [interposed] Okay. All right, so when you got in there, do you remember the great hall? The hall –

WG: [interposed] Yea – oh yeah!

MOORE: And what was the atmosphere when you first went in?

WG: Well, I was a child – um – i-i-it didn't hit me too bad. But e-uh – everybody was sitting around, and of course you had all different nationalities of people, there, you know?

MOORE: Was it crowded?

WG: It was pretty well filled up, yeah.

MOORE: Was it – what were the conditions like? Was it maintained?

WG: It was good, nice and clean – the – anything coming up from the South Americas was an improvement.

MOORE: (Laughs)

WG: [tape skips] Very good.

MOORE: And you stayed in there three [tape skips]

WG: [tape skips] Up fo – yeah

MOORE: [tape skips] Did – and you said the food was good.

WG: [tape skips] Yeah, for me – meal was all –

MOORE: [tape skips] Food was good

WG: Yeah, from – when the meal was all over with, we had – even got often ice cream. [tape skips] That was – all over with we had – even got ice cream. That was a big thing.

MOORE: Was there anything new you never saw before? There? [tape skips] Never saw before? There?

WG: No. 'Cause I'd been on the – the – on the island down in Rio [ph], you know? And uh – they – they took us to class there. And they start teaching us English. On Ellis Island.

MOORE: They started giving you English lessons?

WG: Yeah, they took us to a classroom there – they took the children in for classe – uh – classes

MOORE: And did your mother go for classes too?

WG: Uh – I don't even – I don't remember whether mum came along or not, she might have stayed in the big room and they just took the children into the classroom – and – te – teach 'em English.

MOORE: So where you slept, what kind of conditions was that? Those – you said there were sheets, and pillowcases, where were they?

WG: Yeah that wa – that again was – uh – a sort of a steerage type thing.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: Sleep here, and [not understood] slept above. But everything was nice and clean.

MOORE: Mm-hmm. Okay, so your dad came to get you.

WG: Yeah.

MOORE: Where did you go from there?

WG: Well, then they ha – my dad comes, right? So now they have us all prepare to leave. We were in a room, very much like if you have to go and see a magistrate in the courthouse. He's here, the magistrate's over there, and then there's a gate, very much like that. Now, I remember that. And, uh – whoever sat up there could have been a judge, or ju – acting as a judge at some – he was the man the made the decision. But first thing was, they had my dad up there. Then, uh – down. My mother had to sit up there, then th – two boys got called up. The questions were: Is that your father?

Yes. And, uh, they wanted to make sure that -- we got in the right hands.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: I think that's -- what was it -- what was it was all about, you know. So, uh, we got cleared there. So, uh -- we could -- had our suitcases with us and everything. And uh, we had to foot [ph] a ferry, and the ferry took us to South Ferry on the Battery.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And -- uh -- we got off there. And they had the elevators there in those days. You had to -- Ninth -- Sixth Avenue -- Ninth Avenue -- Third Avenue -- Second Avenue -- elevators were still up. So I was -- said to Dad, "Which one, Dad?" This is in German of course, you know. Uh -- he says, "The third one." So we went up the Third Avenue elevator, and we got off to -- [not understood] Station, either Twenty-Eighth Street or Twenty-Ninth Street on the Third Avenue Elevator in those days. And right on that corner, my dad had -- was living in a furnished room. So we got there, and naturally then we rented another furnished room. The two boys in the furnished rooms for sleeping nights, ma -- Mom and Dad's in the other room. And then, uh -- in the street we were ashamed because we couldn't speak English, and strange and all, we didn't go down the s-street immediately and start playing with the neighborhood children, you know? So, we sat up in the window, and looking out, and there was a market in Twenty-Ninth Street in those days. Outdoor market, with the pushcarts, the whole bit. And we were watching that procedure going on, and it was interesting enough, you know? In the meantime, Mom and Dad -- they went up and looked for an

apartment. And they wound up in Yorkville in the eighties. And they found some – one that was s-selling an apartment with the furniture. So – uh – Mom and Dad bought that one.

MOORE: Bought an apartment?

WG: Yeah. With the furniture in.

MOORE: Or rented it?

WG: No, bought the apartment, then paid the rent.

MOORE: I see.

WG: Bought the furniture.

MOORE: Oh, bought the furniture and then paid rent?

WG: [interposed] Uh – furni – yeah. Then paid rent, right?

MOORE: [interposed] How big was that apartment?

WG: Oh, it had two bedrooms, had a kitchen. It was a cold water flat.

MOORE: What was the address to that?

WG: Five-twenty-four East Eighty-Second Street.

MOORE: And, uh – tell me what happened – what was your father working as, at that time.

WG: He was working as a plasterer.

MOORE: Did your mother go to work?

WG: No.

MOORE: And did you go to school.

WG: Yeah. Seventy Eight Street and New York Avenue. P.S. One Fifty Eight.

MOORE: P.S. One Fifty Eight. Now, describe when you first went to school there, did you have any taunting, or did people make fun of you?

WG: Oh, yeah. I came home one day with a shiner like so-and-so, so my dad says, "I hope you won it. If you didn't, you're gonna get one from me. (Laughs)

MOORE: (Laughs) What was the fight about?

WG: Well, we had a guy in – uh – in – in the class, and in – I think he was Italian descent – and he was taunting me, you know? And it wound up that, uh, on Seventy Ninth Street and New York Avenue we both – got into a fight. And, uh – I couldn't box. From Germany, I was used to more, to wrestling.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: You wrestled a guy when you had an argument with him. Pin him down, you know. And he starts swinging, and sure enough, my eye start popping – swelling, I had a blue eye. So I started swinging too.

I swung and I swung and I swung, finally I connected. He's laying on the floor. The man on the corner – was a drugstore, he came out, the druggist came out and picked him up. That was the end of that. I walked home, we lived Eighty Second, this is Seventy Ninth. So I walked home, I come home, Mama: "Oh, what happened to you?" (Laughs) I had to explain, you know? My dad comes in –

MOORE: [interposed] Was there only one person or was it lots of kids who made fun?

WG: Uh – just uh – primarily this guy.

MOORE: And how about your teachers, were they nice to you?

WG: Yeah – uh – they were nice to me, yeah.

MOORE: Did you learn English – do you remember having any anecdotes about learning English?

WG: It wasn't tough at all.

MOORE: Wasn't tough.

WG: No.

MOORE: And what did you –

WG: [interposed] But, uh – after this incident, fighting and he said – next day, we had to see the principal. I'm coming to class home with a shiner, and uh, the whole school knew it, and by that time the

principal knew it already. So I got called in, I had to explain to him.
And the – the other guy got called in too –

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: -- But separately, we didn't go in together. He lo – and then, uh – the
principal's name was Mr. Weinberg.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: That was the principal's name, yeah, I remember that. And then he
listened to my story – and listened to [tape skips] bothered me
anymore that was –

MOORE: [tape skips] Hmm

WG: [tape skips] Nobody bothered me anymore.

MOORE: Hmm. That's nice.

WG: They left me alone. There was no more wise guys in the cla [tape
skips] alone, there was no more wise guys in the cla – in the school.

MOORE: In that apartment that you lived, was there – uh – plumbing, indoor
plumbing? Or what was the –

WG: [interposed] Just cold water.

MOORE: Cold water. What about the toilet facilities?

WG: I think we had pri – uh – is – uh – privates toilet, yeah.

MOORE: Yeah. And what about heating?

WG: Uh – a cold stove in uh – in the, uh – kitchen.

MOORE: Mm-hmm. And describe a little bit, then, your life after that? What did you do, eh – professionally? What school did you go – what did you -- ?

WG: We – uh – uh – yeah. Now when I – graduated – uh – the grammar school there, P.S. One Fifty Eight in, uh, end of June of 1929. The Wall Street Crash came that fall. In the meantime, my dad always said, “My boys are not going to get in the building trade. It’s too tough.” So, wh – what are you goin – what are you going to be? I said, “I’m gonna be a cop!” I never grew tall enough. Well I couldn’t even become a cop. So my dad came home with the stories that the printers are making good money. Said, “Okay.” So, uh – I want to become a printer. Nobody would hire me. The crash is on –

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: We had no family connections with anyone that was in the printing trade.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: We went – I rem – remember my mother ca – went with me down to the *Staats Zeitung* down on Herald Square, lower Manhattan.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And –

MOORE: [interposed] The – the what? The –

WG: *Staats Zeitung*.

MOORE: What's that?

WG: That was a German newspaper.

MOORE: Ah! Ah! Okay.

WG: S-T-A-A-T-S. And *zeitung* means the newspaper, Staats –

MOORE: [interposed] Okay. Yeah.

WG: So, uh – actually all those pa – [not understood] published incidentally all during the war years in – uh – World War II.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And they had a – front page: “A German speaking” – uh, no: “An American Newspaper in the German Language. That was their slogan.

MOORE: So you went down there?

WG: Yeah, for information. How to get into the printing trade. So, uh, they spoke to my mother and all, they couldn't do much. But they gave us a few suggestions. And then I went to the tra – I went to a trade school.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: I went to a trade school up in Harlem, Vocational High School they called that, on a Hundred and Thirty – Eighth Street between Fifth and Madison Avenue. Ri – right alongside the Harlem River. I remember going up on the Lexington Avenue train, get off at a Hundred Thirty Eighth Street – a Hundred Thirty Fifth Street, and walk off to Harlem River Bridge to the school.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And they taught there the printing trade, the electrical trades, and the carpentry, and other trades too. And we had academics in the morning and we had shop practice in the afternoons. So that was a two year course. So, uh – I'm fifteen years old at this time, and I'm in there, and uh – I've had book binding [tape skips] pretty good [tape skips] and I picked up on it pretty good. So now, down where the linotype machines were – you – and they had five linotype machines in the –

MOORE: What kind of type?

WG: Linotype.

MOORE: Linotype. They had –

WG: Yeah. You – probably seen some already.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: That's what I became. One of the op – those operators. And I think I was the only one out of the whole class who became a linotype operator.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And, uh – four of those machines – the teacher's name was Shannon, and uh, he had always one boy down there, servicing those five machines. And, uh – that boy was graduating and I'd been there a year, so now I'm in my second year, and uh – he always had a test, a spelling test, and a machine test. For the – for the class who would get that job. And, uh, I did all right in the spelling, and I did all right in the machine – job. He got me excused me from all the other academics, and also from all other shop – s- such as book – book-binding, presswork, and so forth. I didn't have to do anymore. I stayed in that linotype room of his and did all the servicing of the machines. I had to take the machines apart, I had to put it together, oil it up, put 'em back together and all, and if it didn't [not understood] I would never become a linotype operator. There they had dummy keyboards, just the keyboards, and –uh – you had to learn the fingering system. That's the first time on the linotype, you had to have your left hand in this position to work the E, T – E, T, A, I, O ink. In this row, all the – the keyboard had ninety-six buttons. I'll never – I thou – I don't think I – I said to myself, "I'll never learn this thing. I'll never learn." I did, I learned it. (Laughs)

MOORE: So you became a –

WG: A linotype operator.

MOORE: Right. And then, what happened uh –

WG: So, I'm two years out of there, and then I had to look for work.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: Now it's 1931. Boy, I ran – I was in unemployment agencies and uh – ads and newspaper ads, running around, running around. Bad habit, huh? And – and – (laughs) I forget I got that on, you know? – and then uh, finally I wrote letters out to here and there, and there was a fella by the name of Weinberg who answered one of my letters.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And I went to see him, and he had a li – he was a handicapped man. He had a – he owned the place, had two linotype machines. He had a – in English you'd call it a game foot. I think he was short and he had the club foot or something, not major. And, uh – by birth. I could have done – he hired me, and he got talking later on and he said – and the teacher – whe – when we graduated, he said, "Whatever you do, when you get out in the world, work for nothing just to get – keep your fingers on that keyboard so you don't forget the fingering of the keyboard!"

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: So, he hired me for a couple of bucks a week. And, uh – I worked for him a while. Then, it happened that, we lived Eighty Fourth Street by this time, Four-Oh-Four East Eight Fourth, and – that was busy – it was opening up underneath you [tape skips] – underneath, you would step – three or four steps down in this, they had

apartments in some of those old houses, but this house was being converted and they were moving linotype machines in there, I saw that. I saw them all the way home from the subway to our home, you know. So, I stopped by one day, got talking to him, so I got hired there for fifteen bucks a week. Well, I worked for him for years.

MOORE: How many years?

WG: 'Til I got a union card. They organized the shop.

MOORE: Did you remain a linotype – uh – operator all your life?

WG: Yeah. I worked at the *Times*, and –

MOORE: [interposed] And did you – when did you – did you marry?

WG: Oh, yeah. Well, I was thirty-one when I got married.

MOORE: And you married ano – did you marry someone of German descent?

WG: Oh, yeah.

MOORE: How did you meet?

WG: We met in a – in a bicycle club! I became a bike ride – I couldn't, uh – in the meantime, with all this, I got into sports, I took some boxing, and I found out that was no good – the other guys had a longer reach, I only have thirty-two sleeve length, and uh – see in the boxing game, they go by weight. I guess you know that, and I was in the hundred thirty five pounders. Well, here – I'm five foot five, a hundred thirty five pounds, and the other guy's a hundred thirty five

pounds and he stands five foot se – five foot eight. And he's got a reach that much longer than I have.

MOORE: So boxing was out?

WG: Boxing was out.

MOORE: We – so you went into biking?

WG: Yeah, I got into bikes sports.

MOORE: [interposed] And you met your wife in a biking club?

WG: Yeah in a bicycle club, yeah.

MOORE: And she's German too

WG: She was born – yeah! She was born in Manhattan.

MOORE: And so, did you speak German to her?

WG: Yeah. Yeah.

MOORE: Okay, so wait a minute –

WG: [interposed] Wha – yeah.

MOORE: So you met your wife, and you're thirty one years old –

WG: Mm-hmm.

MOORE: And did – how long before you married?

WG: Well, she was married!

MOORE: Oh, oh, sorry. (Laughs)

WG: (Laughs) So she had to get a divorce first, but uh – her husband joined the club. And then under – under social occasions, all the bicycle races, he brought his family along. He – he had two girls, and he had a wife, right?

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And, uh – very nice people and all, but it turned out the marriage was fffft [makes a noise] on the way down already – he was having extra-marital affairs.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: So, uh – and then uh – I met her there, but uh, didn't mean a thing. We were friendly and so forth, you know? Got talking, got introduced and talking and all. And then, uh, social affairs. And then, uh – now how did it all come about? Yeah, then he moved to California, and the Wars – then the War is on, he wanted me to – ship him his bicycle to California. But he had to write his wife. And I had to go up and see the wife, because she had the bicycle. And I took the bicycle to a bicycle dealer to crate it, and then we shipped it out by UPS, to California.

MOORE: Must have been some bicycle.

WG: Yeah, racing machines, of course. Racing bicycles, not these, regular ones, you know, tires are so small and [not understood]. And uh – then, uh – got to know the, uh, wife better and all that, and uh, she –she got a divorce, and then, uh – in the meantime, I'm living all alone with my mother. My dad got sick, he got Parkinsons, and in 1939, in July thereabouts, he went to Germany, 'cause the doctors over here couldn't do a thing for him insofar as Parkinsons' Disease. They didn't know much about it. So he was hoping that in Europe – Germany, Austria, any of those countries – they could help more.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: So he's out there, and the war breaks out, September the 1st. Hitler – the nut – the crazy –

MOORE: [interposed] Yeah.

WG: -- Marches into Poland. Right? So, my fa – dad went to a whole damn mess over in Europe. While he's over there, and the war is on, I'm with mama, my brother got married in the meantime, so mama and I are alone. So, uh – then, uh – that kept me out of the war for – for – towards the end, all the way. Then finally, the d-draft board got me down, and they s-s-sent me for a physical, I passed that all right, and then they changed it that they wouldn't take anybody over twenty-nine anymore. We were startin' to win.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: The United States was startin' to win. And, uh – I was just over the twenty-nine, so I never saw any service, I didn't even get called,

because – my mother kept me out of the war. I – sh-she had nobody else, you know? Yeah. Yeah.

MOORE: [interposed] Yeah, because of so – sole – I know it –

WG: Father in Germany – my son – not my son – my brother, he served in the war. He was, uh –

MOORE: And what about – what happened to your father?

WG: And then, uh – my mother died. She had, um – ulcer perforated the intestine, got peritonitis – in those days we didn't have penicillin yet.

MOORE: Right.

WG: If there was penicillin, uh – I think we had it only for the Armed Services. And uh, she passed away.

MOORE: In what year?

WG: '45.

MOORE: Mm-hmm. And what happened to your dad?

WG: And then I got married three weeks after my mother died. I was free. And then, uh, I married, we're living in uh – West Seventy Fifth Street, furnished, wife, with her two daughters. And, uh – one fine day we get a letter by way of Red Cross. It's my dad, from Germany. So naturally the care packages went right out, you know?

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And then uh – we established communication with the mail and all, and then, uh, my wife was working, and, uh, I got a steady job at the news finally. I sub – sub – I worked as a sub at The New York Daily News from 1936 to 1944 before I got a steady job. Subbing. I subbed at The Wall Street Journal, at the – at The New York Times, at The Daily Mirror, at The Journal of Commerce, and at The Daily News. But in The Daily News I stayed, I had my – traveler's card deposited there, so I was establishing priority, seniority there. For a job.

MOORE: And did you have um – did your father ever come back to the United States?

WG: No. Parkinson's was so bad that he couldn't make the trip.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: We asked him would he want to come back home and he said no. So that n – I went out to see him in 1948 on a compassionate visit. I had to go down to the Pentagon building – Mama came along we had a car, we drove down that night, by morning we were in Washington. We w – went to a restaurant –

MOORE: Who is mama now? Your wife?

WG: My wife.

MOORE: Your wife.

WG: W – Yeah. And, uh – we had breakfast and we freshened up and all, then went over to the Pentagon, I had to see Lieutenant So-and-so, and the – they – they gave me clearance, to go on a compassionate visit to Germany.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: So, uh – I left from LaGuardia Airport in a converted B-17 – converted to passenger service.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: B- 17, we flew to Gander, Newfoundland, from Gander Newfoundland we flew into Prestwick – no, Shannon Airport, Ireland.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: We had a passenger aboard who wanted to go to Scotland, so we flew up to Prestwick Airport [Glasgow], Scotland.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And from there we flew into Amsterdam. And there we were held up, because there was an airplane accident on the Berlin airlift. With the Russians we had that airlift – uh – Truman had that airlift goin'. So we're si – sittin' there and sittin' there – they wouldn't let us out of the airport, because we had no visa for Holland.

MOORE: Mm-hmm. But you eventually saw your father?

WG: Oh yeah, we got into Frankfurt that night, and, uh – the plan flew into Frankfurt, then I got myself a railroad, on the railroad, and then I got down to Karlsruhe, East. Down – you mi – you mighta heard of Baden-Baden –

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: We're not from there. It's wo – [ph]

MOORE: Would your father have come if he would have been able to come physically to the United States?

WG: He woulda come back, yeah.

MOORE: Yeah. Did you –?

WG: [interposed] He was an American citizen. All this while.

MOORE: [interposed] Okay. Did you, um – when you look back on your life in terms of the evaluation for your family coming from Germany –

WG: Yeah.

MOORE: -- Do you – how do you view your immigration to the United States.

WG: One of the best things that ever happened. I thanked my father for bringing me to the United States while I was out there. I said, "If you hadn't brought me to the United States, I'd be in Russia pushing up daisies."

MOORE: Mm. Do you think that your mother found that –

WG: [interposed] He – now he was crying he was so – happy that he was – that I recognize the fact. If I'd stayed in Germany, I woulda been in the military over there, I wouldn't have survived. So I told me – told him that -- and thanked him that – for bringing me to the United States.

MOORE: And, your father felt that – that – that his decision to go the United States was a good one?

WG: Oh, yes, definitely.

MOORE: Your mother?

WG: Also.

MOORE: And your brother?

WG: Also.

MOORE: How about your – your cousin?

WG: My –m-m-m-my uncle? Yeah, who came with us here – Also.

MOORE: So you think that everybody viewed this very positively?

WG: Uh – ba – absolutely.

MOORE: All right.

WG: Oh, yeah.

MOORE: Well, I'd like to thank you on behalf of Ellis Island –

WG: [interposed] Yeah.

MOORE: -- For helping us and – and participating in this.

WG: Mm-hmm.

MOORE: Uh – and we'll send you a copy, as we said –

WG: Yeah.

MOORE: This – probably in the summer time.

WG: Yeah. Incidentally, my dad died the following year, 1949.

MOORE: He died in '49?

WG: Yeah. He was born '88 – 1980 [sic] was his birthday, and died in '49, so he was sixty-one years old.

MOORE: Mm. Do you think, um, did you – or any of your family members – want to go return to Germany to live?

WG: No. No. Visit, yeah. And I haven't been back since.

MOORE: I see.

WG: Now my, uh – the story of my wife is she was born in New York, and incidentally, she was four years older than I was, so she was born

1909, and her father and mother emigrated to the United States from Hungary that time.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: Pre-World War number one. And, uh, they met on a ship, and they married in New York. A – a – a brother was born, and then my wife was born in 1909, and there was an inheritance or something to be collected over in Rom – in Hungary. And they went – and you couldn't get the money out of the country, so they went over there. And she was a couple years old, and the World War number one breaks out –

MOORE: Mm.

WG: Her father got drafted over in the Hungarian army, survived it, the war is all over with, and he says, "Why should I go back to the – to the States?"

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: "I fought for the country, I might as well stay here." He was back in his hometown.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And he didn't like it too much over here. He was a bricklayer, and the pace of laying bricks was too fast for him. You found that – I heard that from other people. Uh – they came from Europe, and they couldn't stand the pace over here, they were – more – take it easy over in Europe.

MOORE: So you knew Germans who did go back? You knew of Germans who –

WG: [interposed] I've heard of that, oh yeah. And then this is one of those incidents he went back and got hung up in the war of course. And then he said, like – uh, that woulda been my father-in-law, right? And he said, uh – “Well I fought for the country, you know as well stay here.

MOORE: Hmm. Did you have children then after – more children than your two daughters?

WG: Uh, yes. Well, I've had, uh, two girls by her first husband, my wife had two s – daughters be her second husband. I got a Carol, my firstborn, she called last night, she lives in Cliff, New Jersey, and my Brenda calls every Sunday, she lives outside of Boston.

MOORE: Mm.

WG: In Massachusetts.

MOORE: Is your wife then – is she still living now?

WG: No, she passed away, oh, a little over two years ago.

MOORE: I see.

WG: Second stroke. She got a first stroke, and – we were visiting, we live thirteen years in, uh, Phoenix, Arizona – Sun City down there.

MOORE: Mm.

WG: From New York we moved down there. That was back in 1976, and then we used to come up here and all, and visit and all – you know? And uh, one of the visits Joni, my daughter lives next door – daughter by marriage of course – and, uh, she's single, and, uh, she lived on the other end of town, and we stayed there, she had an extra room, and we'd sometimes come up for two or three weeks.

MOORE: Mm.

WG: We'd housesit while Joni would go to new York and visit.

MOORE: Mm.

WG: Things like that. Came in handy, you know? And, uh – one of them, three days before we was late to go back to Phoenix, my wife gets a stroke about nine in the morning. Sh – we was having a second cup of coffee so to speak, and we're talking along – oh, every conversation is English – and she starts slurring her speech. And she start talking German. And then I look at her, and her eyes start whirling, and I grab her – she didn't fall, I says, "Honey, you had a stroke." "Huh? Huh? Huh? I had no stroke!" I think I'm near – I got on the phone, nine eleven, you know, and I called Joni up, so, uh – they were over in no time, and we put her in the Sunrise Hospital, she was in there twelve days then they had her under UMC for fifty days for therapy. Speech therapy –

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And – physical therapy.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And she pro – got through that very nicely. Speech came out very nice. Physically, she was a little affected on the left side. And her memory – her old things from years and years ago she remembered very well.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: It was what happened yesterday she couldn't remember.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: But we could traverse, and w-we traveled back and forth for years, then finally, down in Sun City, I get up one morning, I got chest pains. And, uh – by the after – afternoon I still got chest pains. So, I said to m-my wife, said, "Oh, honey, I got, uh, chest pains all day." She says, "Why don't you go into a hospital?" So I called them up, the Roswell Hospital down in Sun City. And they told me to come on down. No sooner I drive myself – I left my wife alone now, nobody to take care of her, right? Not that she needed to care, but if anything goes wrong, (pause) there was nobody there to help her. And, uh – they g-give me a thorough examination, must have been down there three hours or more. And then finally discharge me, and they said what I had was anxiety pains. So then I said, "Well, this is a sign. Anything happens to me, there's no one down here to take care of Mama. We're moving to Las Vegas." Oh, Mama was all for that. She loved Las Vegas, slot machines, the whole bit you know. (Laughs) Didn't have to twist her arm. So we put the house up for a

sale, and this was when we – the big problem started in Phoenix with the keating five.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: The SNL sla –

MOORE: [interposed] Mm-hmm

WG: uh – swindled the whole bit. And more houses were being sold, I couldn't sell my house. So – we – we had enough to put down payment on over here, you know? But then it came that, uh – I had to, uh – pay cash for this one here, or take a mortgage out. So, I took a mortgage out, and then I needed another mortgage – I took a bridge mortgage. So, uh – we're living up here, the house down here, I got a mortgage – I was paying three mortgages at one time.

MOORE: Hmm.

WG: And finally we sold the house down here, and then that solved everything – that – the house got sold, that mortgage got absorbed by the man that bought that house, the bridge got paid off with the profits, and this house was mortgaged already, so I only got one mortgage. But, uh, she liked it up here. She said, "I don't want – I don't want to ever go back to Phoenix." And the doctor told me the first when we had – had in Sunrise Hospital, back in – she di – we moved up here in July of '89, and Mama had her first stroke I think in 1987. And he said the next one's gonna be it. So we sittin' here and one night, and uh – watching – it was a Saturday evening, was watching the Lawrence Roadshow, right on that sofa there, and uh – we're making comments, and uh – about the different actors and so

forth – and then comes on (pause) The Golden Girls, then came on The Empty Nest. By this time it's nine thirty, thereabouts, so, uh – and I'm sittin' on that end, and Mama's sitting where you are. So, naturally she's this side of me and I'm looking that way, you know? And we're – we're making conversation and I make conversation and I don't get an answer, I take a look, my God! The silent killer. Face all distorted. What a – holy Moses! I jump up get on that phone, 911. Joni's in Los Angeles, she went down with a couple of girls on a shopping spree or something, and uh – the uh – 911 [not understood] mighta been couple of minutes, you know. And, uh – I knew it was the end then. Her whole body was shaking, wracking and all. And, uh, they came up and fire engines came up, they took her down. I left a note for Joan, and locked up the house for her. She got three dogs over there, so I took care of them. And then I got in the car, and then I got down there, and they had Mama – Mama's the wife – uh, and uh – and, uh – I made a phone call, I got Joni on the phone, I says, "Rather than you come down, let me come up and get ya." So I got all up and got her, and we both get back, and Mama was recognizing us yet. She smiled at me, she squeezed Joni's hand, and, uh – from there on, she was out. And now the big question – I had her put up in intensive, uh – and – uh – living will. I says, "Yeah, well we signed one but I haven't got it with me." No life supports. So, uh – then they put Mama up into the fifth floor into another room, they had her up there. But she ne – she was – had her eyes closed and all she was doing, she was just breathing. As far as I could see – and the doctors never came by – that's what I had against the Su – my – I used to like that Sunrise Hospital, but, uh, I don't care for it anymore – the attention we got. Theirs doctors knew that was hopeless.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: But they didn't tell us.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And we coul – we couldn't see a doctor. The doctor never came up and we were there, to check on my wife, and then – she had been up there – three days, four days. She died three or four days before her eighty-first birthday. That was 1990. November.

MOORE: [interposed] And that was the mo – big tragedy in your family than –

WG: Yeah that – oh, yeah. That – that was the biggest. And [not understood] and, uh, after the war, and all, and my brother and I had a falling out, and – uh – I moved out here, there was no goodbye, no nothing, he stayed on his side of town and I stayed on my side, and then one fine day back in 1983 thereabouts, I get a phone call from some – some – district attorney's assistant – uh – uh – locating missing persons or something – well, they – the gist of it was, he finally found me after looking and looking and he got my address from the New York Daily News, and he wanted to inform me that my brother died.

MOORE: Mm.

WG: And he had no children. So, okay fine. And, uh – ju – far as I'm concerned, uh, that's the biggest tragedy – my – losing my wife three years ago.

MOORE: Well, that's really important for our records that we know about your life, and everything, and I think –

WG: [interposed] 'Cause yeah – 'cause we – we got along very, very well, it lasted forty five years.

MOORE: Did your children speak German?

WG: Our Carol did very well while we still lived in Flushing, New York in Fresh Meadow area there, she went to Francis Luce High School there and she had to take Foreign Language –

[TAPE SKIPS]

MOORE: Uh, you were mentioning – uh, you were mentioning that – uh, I want to – what I want to ask you is that –

WG: Yeah.

MOORE: Now that you're chi – you are alone here, but your children live in this country, uh, then – did it ever occur to you retire back in Germany?

WG: Never. Never. Never. I haven't been back since 1948.

MOORE: And you don't have any desire to go back?

WG: No. All my uncles that knew me and I knew them, they uh, all passed away by now. And we did have visitors – was it a year ago? Yeah, I-I-let's say it was a year ago, maybe a year and a half or whatever, I get a phone call one day here, a young girl on the phone. So, uh – she says, uh, after a few words – she spoke English, she says – in German: *Ich bin un Weingartner*. I'm a Weingartner.

And, uh, I says, "Yeah?" I say, "Who was your father?"

She says, "Adolf."

I say, "Wha --? Adolf? Adolf lives in Brazil." His son was here over two years ago, I told you that.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: And, uh, came visit up here, stayed twelve days with us. And, uh, she says, "Yeah."

I said, "Wha – what was your grandfather's name?"

She says, "Fritz."

I said, "He worked at a brewery?"

She says, "Yeah, right."

Fritz, the grandfather, who worked at the brewery, had two sons, one of them he named Adolf. So there's two Adolf Weingartners – one in German – one was in Brazil – of course, he passed on already – but he left a son by the name of Alberto.

MOORE: Mm-hmm

WG: Whose mother died in childbirth, I told you that.

MOORE: Mm-hmm

WG: And, uh, he was up here visiting with his wife. And he's got a couple of sons. They're doing very well – one with a phone company in Brazil, and, uh, doing very good. Got a good job. And now this young girl, she was born in 1961, my wife and Joan they went out behind the Iron Curtain to visit her father.

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: In Rom – now Hungary by this time is Romania.

MOORE: Mm.

WG: And they got behind the Iron Curtain, they visit her gran – her father, and Joni's grandfather, and on the way back, they stopped and visit my relatives in Germany, down near Karlsruhe/Baden-Baden –

MOORE: Mm-hmm.

WG: In that area. And, uh, while they were there, a baby was born. That's the girl that made a phone call. But this time she's grown up!

MOORE: Mm.

WG: And she came with her husband, he works for a bank out there, in Germany. They both spoke English, they took a tour, from Germany to L.A., rented a car, and drove to the Excalibur. She called from the Excalibur. So I said, "How will I know you, when I – " (Laughs) I said, "I'll come down and get you, meet you, you know?" So, uh, I go down the Excalibur, and look – people walking by and all, you know, finally – that must be her. I picked the right one. It was her. So, uh – then I called Joni in the meantime bef – [not understood] she – she's working for the – Colorado River Commission up here, the water. And, uh – told her, that uh, we're gonna have company for the evening. So, I brought 'em up here, and we talked and so forth, and then, uh, that night we went out to dinner – we went over to Showboat, had something to eat. And they had rented a little Geo – automobile, those little Geos. And they traveled all the way from L.A. to he –whe – here, next day they were headed for, uh – Death

Valley. Up there. And from there – I guess back there again. I haven't seen them since. But we heard of them – in the meantime, they – they went back home again, and uh – they had a little son born, and they named him Simon. S-I-M-O-N. I thought what the heck is Simon, naming somebody Simon – what – that's what the da – the modern German's are doing now, they give 'em all odd names, you know. It's not like – oh, incidentally, when we came to grammar school in P.S. One Fifty Eight – we're going back sixty years now – so – the teachers couldn't say Erik, my brothers name is Kurt – K-U-R-T, I got renamed, Richard, they called me Dick, for the duration while I was in school. My brother got named Harry. His name was Harry. Now Erik is a common name and Kurt's a common name. Kurt Russell is an actor and they're all – there's a lot of other Kurts walking around. Right? But when – sixty years ago, that was a – an unusual name.

MOORE: Yeah, times change.

WG: Very often, yeah. [ph]

MOORE: Again, I'd like to thank you, and I'd like to um – to tell you that we will send you this –

WG: [interposed] Yeah – I enjoyed hav – uh, do – doing this. I find you both very nice.

MOORE: [interposed] I really appreciate it. Very – and, um this is –

WG: You made the job easy for me. (Laughs) I was wondering how it's going to go, before you came.

MOORE: Well, this is Kate Moore signing off in Sun City, Nevada, uh, this January 21st 1994, for the Ellis Island Oral History Project.

WG: Fine.

MOORE: Thanks.

[END OF INTERVIEW]